



THE PATRIOT

Official newsletter of the John Hampden Society

Issue 107 - September 2023

WELCOME TO THE PATRIOT 107!

Many thanks to the contributors to this quarter's newsletter for helping me in my new role. Particular thanks to new member Pat Moody for his photos and article. Many thanks also to the members who gave feedback on the last edition – thank you for your encouragement. We have some interesting and varied items for readers this quarter, and I hope that you enjoy reading them. Dr Beth Rogers, Chair (and reluctant editor 😊)

IN THIS EDITION

Page 1 - Hamden, Connecticut

Page 2 - Cromwell Day Service and commemorations

Page 3 - Book Reviews:

The Restless Republic and Act of Oblivion

Page 4 - The missed opportunities at Turnham Green

Correction to Patriot 106 – The date of the Society's visit to Great Hampden Church was MAY 28th, not March 28th. Apologies for any confusion caused.

Please make a note in your diary for November 18th at 4pm, when Howard Robinson of the Cromwell Association will be giving a Zoom talk for us on Oliver Cromwell and the Battle of Worcester. Further news on the website in due course.



Dr Jonathan Fitzgibbons, University of Lincoln, giving the Address at the Oliver Cromwell memorial service in Worcester on Saturday 2nd September. Full report on page 2.

HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT

Many thanks to Pat Moody for this photo of him in re-enactment gear with the Hamden, Connecticut town sign. It is great to see that the naming of the town for John Hampden is right up front on the sign!



UPDATE ON THE SHIP MONEY MONUMENT

Honor End Lane has been completely resurfaced, which means that users of the road will no longer have to dodge the potholes. The new permissive path, negotiated by committee member Peter Osborne, is available to walkers to avoid them having to use the road. Thanks are due to Peter and Jim Rodda for their regular maintenance at the site of the monument. It is still a matter of frustration that we cannot make progress on the cleaning of the monument and re-cutting the inscription. However, Jim and Peter continue to lobby on this issue.

FACEBOOK ACTIVITY

Many thanks to Pat Claus for energising our Facebook presence! Please could members on Facebook "like" and "follow"?

FEATURE IN THE CHILTERN SOCIETY MAGAZINE

The latest issue of the Chiltern Society magazine includes a double page spread on John Hampden, including the Hampden Walk and Ship Money Monument, with an article by the Chair of the John Hampden Society.

CROMWELL DAY SERVICE 2023

On the eve of the commemoration of the Battle of Worcester, the Cromwell Association met to lay a wreath at the Commandery in Worcester and to hold a service of remembrance at St Andrew's Church. The Address "In conversation with Oliver Cromwell" was given by Dr Jonathan Fitzgibbons, University of Lincoln and Cromwell Association Council member. Dr Gibbons featured the new edition of Oliver Cromwell's letters and speeches. He explained that speeches, even in Parliament, were approximate records as the clerks could not go fast enough with quill pens, so they had to compare their notes and edit them into a final version after the event.

He critiqued the reliability of the memoirs of Cromwell's contemporaries. Exploring some passages from Bulstrode Whitlocke's memoirs pre and post Restoration, it was clear that Whitlocke's recollection of the events of the Civil War and Commonwealth were altered. It was probably necessary to protect his family, but for historians, it raises questions about what we can and cannot trust in claimed conversations with Oliver Cromwell. For example, post-Restoration, Whitlocke suggested that he had a conversation in 1652 with Cromwell in which Cromwell implied that he aspired to be King and Whitlocke dissuaded him. It is clear from public records that Cromwell refused Parliament's offers of kingship, which suggests that reality was the other way around.

Only in his letters can we discern the real General and Lord Protector. From Cromwell's letters we see a leader who was accessible and sought conversation with many different types of people. It is also clear that his most important conversations were with God. The service finished with Cromwell's favourite Psalm (Number 85) and his last prayer.

The photo, kindly supplied by Howard Robinson, is of the musket salute of members of the Battle of Worcester Society to all those who perished in the Battle of Worcester. It took place on Fort Royal, Worcester, on September 3rd.



BOOK REVIEW

THE RESTLESS REPUBLIC: Britain without a Crown by BETH ROGERS

The Restless Republic: Britain with a Crown

Author: Anna Keay

Publisher: William Collins Books (paperback version 2023)

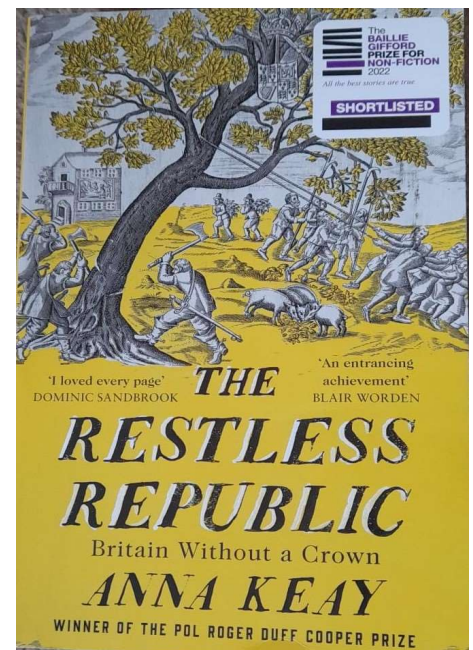
ISBN 9780008282059

£10.99

Shortlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction 2022

Having concentrated their efforts on the trial and execution of the king, no one had planned for what would come afterwards. There were very few committed republicans, and although the winners of the Civil War had claimed to be Parliamentarians, Pride's Purge which had ensured moderate MPs were excluded from the House in December 1648, sowed the seeds for a military dictatorship.

CONTINUED AT BOTTOM OF PAGE 3



BOOK REVIEW

ACT OF OBLIVION by ROBERT HARRIS

Many members will have read at least one of Robert Harris' fifteen novels. They are always meticulously researched and a pleasure to read. This book is essentially an account of the manhunt ordered by Charles II after his restoration. The surviving signatories of Charles I's death warrant found themselves on the run. In May 1660, two of them, Edward Whalley and William Goffe, escaped aboard *The Prudent Mary* bound for New England. Other regicides believed the promises made and turned themselves in, only to end up hung drawn and quartered.

In his author's note, Harris insists that all the locations, dates, events and characters are real except for Richard Naylor. Harris believes that there must have been such a person leading the manhunt but that "his identity is lost to history". Lieutenant-General Edward Whalley MP was the son of Francis Cromwell, and therefore a first cousin of both Oliver Cromwell and John Hampden. Major-General William Goffe MP, a religious radical, was his son in law. Both were veterans of the Civil Wars. Though initially well received when they arrived in New England the two men soon found themselves being passed between safe houses and were eventually driven into hiding in the wilderness.

Harris inter-weaves the narrative of the men's travails in New England with descriptions of the political machinations in London, the fate of other regicides and the desperate situations that their families find themselves in. As the years pass the sense of isolation and personal loss mount. A third regicide, John Dixwell, also fled to New England and lived out his life under an assumed name. He is mentioned only in passing in this novel.

For those wishing to learn more about the subject there are three modern books; Christopher Paliano's *The Great Escape of Edward Whalley and William Goffe* (2012), Matthew Jenkinson's *Charles I's Killers in America: The Lives and Afterlives of Edward Whalley and William Goffe* (2019) and Charles Spencer's *Killers of the King: The Men who dared to execute Charles I* (2014). I would also recommend Peter Ackroyd's *Mister Milton in America* (1996) for those convinced by Robert Harris's evocation of 17th century New England and wishing to linger there a little longer.

It is intriguing to speculate whether-or-not John Hampden would, had he survived, signed the King's death warrant. If so, would he have found himself on the run in 1660 like his cousin?

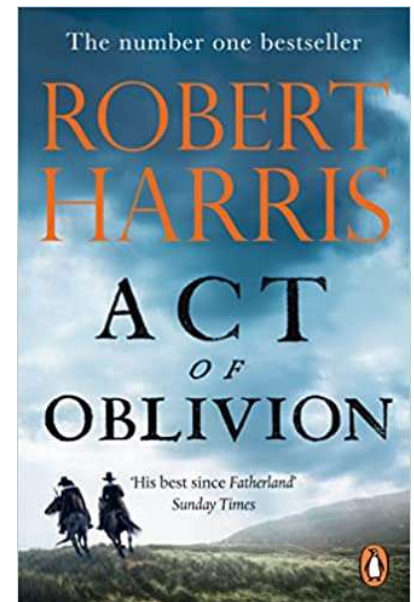
Sam Hearn

BOOK REVIEW

THE RESTLESS REPUBLIC - CONTINUED

This is a well-crafted and serious history book backed up with detailed references and an extensive index. It is also accessible. The book describes the Republic's progress through the stories of some fascinating individuals such as John Bradshaw, the lawyer who chaired the trial of Charles I, Gerrard Winstanley, leader of the Diggers, the royalist Countess of Derby, the turncoat journalist Marchmont Nedham, the visionary Anna Trapnel and the L'Estrange family of Norfolk, as well as spending some time analysing the Cromwells.

Act of Oblivion
– by Robert
Harris
ISBN
97815291603
21
Published in
paperback
June 2023
In paperback
576 pages.



By personalising the history, the book encourages the reader to feel for the people involved and challenges you to make your own judgments about the failures and successes of the time.

For me, it seemed that there were a number of factors in the failure of the Republic:

The first disappointment was that the attempt to connect with the Dutch Republic not only failed, but resulted in estrangement from the one place where something might have been learnt about governance without a king.

- The second disappointment was that whatever was done to engineer Parliamentary candidates, Parliaments continued to be bitterly divided in a way which resulted in them achieving nothing, and giving the Army (and subsequently the Lord Protector) an excuse to close them down. Although it was a time of social mobility, lasting social reform was elusive.

- A degree of religious tolerance was delivered in England, but it excluded Anglicans as well as Catholics which meant that the majority of church-goers were subject to the orthodoxy of extreme Protestant views, including the banning of Christmas. That was never going to last.

- The appalling genocide and apartheid in Ireland was a terrible stain on the reputation of the Republic, even for the standards of the time. Henry Cromwell (Oliver's most competent son) tried to undo some of the damage, but it was too little, too late.

Despite its failings, the author explains that the resistance to the Republic has been over-played. Charles II fought the Battle of Worcester with a Scottish Army, there were few English recruits. Even after the toppling of Richard Cromwell, there was no explicit intention to restore the monarchy. General Monck played a brave role in bringing down the Army, and he might have been the next Lord Protector, but it was clear that any freely elected parliament was in the mood to bring back the monarchy, and he, formerly a Cromwell loyalist, became the facilitator for that.

Does John Hampden get a mention? Yes, on page 268 – in the context as someone in whom Oliver Cromwell confided. Is it worth the cover price? Yes. It is so informative and fascinating, even if it may leave you feeling rather depressed about what should have been and what might have been.

Beth Rogers

GREENCOATS TO THE RESCUE! ESSEX'S BLUNDER AND HAMPDEN'S MISSED CHANCE

A joy of historians, both professional and amateur, is the pursuit of the 'what-ifs'. Had Colonel Hampden received Essex's promised regiments of foot, horse, and two pieces of artillery, might Turnham Green have been the decisive battle in the Civil War?

The two pieces of artillery may have been positioned on the spur of ground on Acton Hill between Bollo Brook and Stamford Brook, close to the Royalist's weakened left. To avoid friendly fire, Hampden's gunners needed to aim the pieces to shoot just *behind* enemy lines, either as a scare tactic or to inflict actual damage to the royalist rear, forcing them to move closer to Essex, pushing against their front ranks in their haste to avoid cannon fire.

The artillery, filled with case shot or simply gunpowder, would fire 'blanks' as a simple scare tactic. The noise and smoke being enough to make the already fiery Rupert divert his cavalry towards the sound of these surprise cannons, allowing Essex's forces to bear down on a confused royalist front. Bolstered by Essex's reinforcements, Hampden's Greencoats (just shy of a thousand) and the remnants of Brooke's Purplecoats, Hampden would have the luxury of dividing his troops, sending units to retake key houses and bridges lining Charles' assumed escape path under the cover of his artillery 'bombardment'. A small garrison at Gunnersbury House would block any royalist escape towards the village of Acton while Hampden moved around the main entrance to Brentford to avoid remaining royalist troops. A hard march of more than two miles, but possible given proper motivation.

With control of Sir Richard Wynn's House and the bridge over the Brent, Hampden would have a secure position to block any royalist retreat with his remaining men (possibly 2,000) if he was garrisoning houses or holding key points along the way. A small number to block a retreating army, to be certain, but it's important to note Charles' men would be quickly bottlenecked had Essex been pursuing from the rear, Hampden acting as the anvil to Essex's hammer.

Northumberland's Syon House would have been another viable option for Hampden to take, although it would have taken some time and great risk. Only held by a single regiment of foot under Thomas Blagge, the great house sat in a suitable location above the Thames. This was proven when Blagge's men fired effectively on Parliament's gunpowder barges on their way to London. With a Parliamentarian garrison at Syon House, Wynn's House, Gunnersbury House, and possibly West Sheen and Little Ealing, Charles would have great difficulty extracting his nearly 12,000 men from their cramped position, effectively surrounded in a rough triangle.

Had Turnham Green been a Parliamentary victory, potentially leading to a forced capitulation by Charles, Rupert's banishment, and the remainder of the royalist army being forced to disarm and go home, would the limited monarchy that most of Parliament had taken up arms for been ushered in? Charles would have had little choice but to entertain both Houses' grievances, lack of military support swaying a decision to abdicate in favour of one of his sons, or, in an extreme circumstance, a close contender for the throne; Northumberland being a potential choice, for example.

PAT MOODY

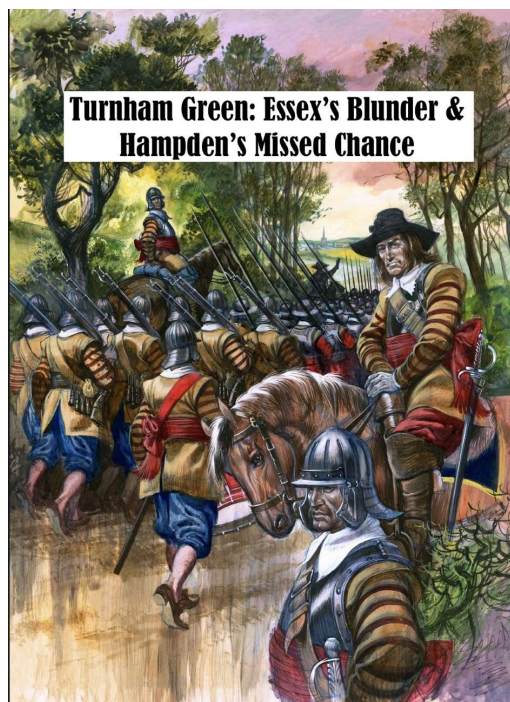
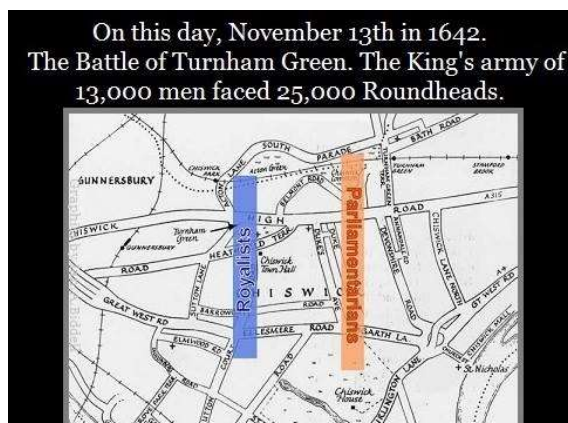


Illustration is courtesy of Rob Embleton, who provided the artwork for Lookandlearn.com, and the map is from lostcityoflondon.co.uk



Acknowledgements for photos and copy: Pat Moody, Howard Robinson, Jim Rodda, Peter Osborne, Dr Beth Rogers, Sam Hearn.

Images & Sources: for Pat Moody's article:

The Brentford & Chiswick Local History Society; Lipscombe, Nick *The English Civil War: An Atlas & Concise History of The Wars of the Three Kingdoms 1638-51*. (2020). Osprey Publishing. London; Marsh, S., & Porter, S. (2011). *The Battle for London*. Amberly. Gloucestershire; The Battlefields Trust; Lostcityoflondon.co.uk; Rob Embleton

Printed by: Sarsen Printers, Winchester.

info@sarsenpress.com 01962 854281

Published by: The John Hampden Society, High Wycombe.

www.johnhampden.org

Registered charity: 1098314

The John Hampden Society is a registered charity which exists to bring together people with an interest in John Hampden, and to encourage wider knowledge of this great 17th century Parliamentarian, his life and times.

Every effort is made to attribute facts and contributions correctly. If any mistakes have been made, they will be corrected in the next issue after notification has been received.